

Testimony to the Senate Economic Development Committee September, 13, 2013

Good morning. I am Dr. Robert Simpson, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at Kettering University. It is my pleasure to be here today.

Kettering University prepares students for lives of extraordinary leadership and service by providing a distinctive learning environment that couples industry-based co-operative education with rigorous programs of study in engineering, science, mathematics, and business. We are dedicated to driving the economic development and the vitality of Flint, Genesee County, and the State of Michigan. It is our belief that delivering continued excellence in education is one of the best ways to develop a safe, secure, sustainable, and economically viable city and region.

Our academic programs are peerless. Recent *U.S. News and World Report* place our Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering program at number one and our Mechanical Engineering number three among undergraduate programs in the United States. 98% of our students are either employed or enrolled in a graduate school within six months of graduation, with approximately 85% staying in Michigan. We have outstanding faculty and research laboratories that focus on applied research of immediate value to our partners. Notable examples are Dr. Kevin Bai who runs the Advanced Power Electronics Laboratory and has received more than \$1.5 million in research funding over the last two years from Michigan-based companies, Dr. Janet Brelin-Fornari runs our Crash Safety Center and works closely with the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration on the development of the next generation of car safety seats for

children, and, Drs. Mary Gillam and Susan Farhart are developing unique surface coatings and processes that show tremendous commercial potential.

Kettering is committed to the vitality of the Flint area. With philanthropic support, we turned a troublesome community location into an asset with the installation of an Einstein Bros Bagels and a Flint Police Service Center; and we have installed state-of-the-art surveillance equipment to help secure not only our campus, but also our surrounding neighborhoods. We are currently working with the Genesee County Land Bank to return blighted properties to green space. And we are a partner in the University Avenue Corridor Coalition, which is dedicated to transforming University Avenue into an economically viable and crime-free zone that will be walk-able and bike-able for those travelling between Kettering's campus to downtown Flint. As part of this development, we have agreed to assume responsibility for the 11,000 seat Atwood Stadium, helping to ensure that it remains a useful facility for the community for many years to come.

Importantly our students are involved in local service projects in our surrounding neighborhoods, our students offer evening tutoring for Flint students in grades 3-12 two evenings a week throughout the school year, and a two teams of Kettering undergraduates have worked over the last six months with St. Luke NEW Life Enterprises, which produces high quality medical scrubs, to improve workflow and productivity and develop a business plan that will guide the organization's growth from nine part-time employees to 100 employees and ultimately 1000 employees.

Two additional projects under development, our *FIRST Robotics* Community Center and our Kettering University Student Automotive Research Area in part of Chevy-in-the-Hole, which upon completion will impact the youth of our community in addition to our students.

In closing, Kettering University through its programs of study, applied research, and service is uniquely suited to assume a leadership role in the economic revitalization of Flint and the region, a role we fully embrace.

I thank the Senate Economic Development Committee for the opportunity to testify and look forward to working with you and the other presenters on the continued economic revitalization of our community.